



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Secretary
Press Service



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Dixon Merritt
Assistant in Charge,
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THE GOOD AND BAD OF MOLES

Moles have been dealt with in the United States chiefly as a nuisance, but in some European countries they are trapped extensively not only to be rid of them as a pest but also to harvest their pelts, says Farmers' Bulletin 1247, American Moles as Agricultural Pests and as Fur Producers, a recent publication prepared by Theo. H. Scheffer, assistant biologist, of the Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, and now ready for distribution. Millions of European moleskins have been used by fur manufacturers in this country and until recently have furnished the sole supply.

The fact that the skins of some American moles, especially those found in western Washington and Oregon, are larger and have better texture

than those from Europe has been recognized, and there is now a demand for American moleskins by some important American fur dealers. The pelt of the common mole of the Eastern States, though smaller, is about the same quality as that of the European species, and if collected in sufficient numbers to create a demand might be marketed at a slight profit, says the bulletin. The propagation of moles for their fur, however, is impracticable.

All species of moles live chiefly upon earthworms and insects that inhabit the ground. To the extent that they destroy insects they are beneficial to the farmer; but they often work in lawns and newly planted gardens, doing considerable damage by heaving up the soil and undermining tender plants. While all are undesirable in such places, no general warfare against an unobjectionable insectivorous mammal should be encouraged, the writer says.

There is now a steady demand in the fur industry for American moleskins, and the development of a market for them will stimulate trapping. This is especially desirable in localities where moles are troublesome. Copies of the bulletin may be had free upon application to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

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